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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6034
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1472

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DEPARTMENT FOR DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM UN EUN PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL: REACTION TO US VIEWS ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL 5TH SESSION

REF: SECSTATE 91929

THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST - PLEASE SEE PARA 3.

¶1. (U) Pol-econ officer delivered reftel points underscoring deep USG unhappiness with the results of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) 5th Session with MFA Deputy Director of Human Rights and International Affairs Susana Vaz Patto. Patto replied that the Portuguese were also quite unhappy with the special mandate on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories but was unable to overrule the effort given its majority support. Vaz Patto shared our concerns about many of the developments of the HRC's last session.

¶2. (SBU) In an effort to turn things around and generate momentum for more positive outcomes, Vaz Patto highlighted six items that Portugal hopes to present at the UN this September once it has agreement from other EU member states: (1) Work to strengthen UN criticism of the situation in Darfur; (2) Initiate an effort to respond to Sri Lanka's human rights violations; (3) Resume discussion on the religious intolerance initiative started in the HRC's 4th session; (4) Open discussion on the Italian-sponsored draft resolution on the death penalty; (5) Consider a proposal on children's rights; and (6) Restart discussions on the UN response to Belarus. Patto emphasized that Portugal concurs with most of our policy objectives, with the exception of the death penalty resolution.

¶3. (U) ACTION REQUEST: Vaz Patto solicited the USG's policy goals for the upcoming UNGA and said the EU would like to collaborate more closely, especially on country-specific agenda items, to maintain a united front on these issues. Post requests Department guidance on priority items so that we can begin coordinating our efforts as early as possible. End Action Request.

O'Neal